

● 大学英语翻译教材

汉英翻译讲评

ON CHINESE-ENGLISH
TRANSLATION

● 单其昌 著

对外贸易教育出版社

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前 言

国内已出版的翻译理论与技巧书籍讲的大多是如何翻译一个单句。但在翻译实践中，人们往往以段甚至以整篇文章为着眼点去译，有的译文在单句翻译中是可行的，但一放到整个文章中就不行了。一些年轻的朋友建议，从这一观点出发写一本翻译讲评可能对读者有一定参考价值，我想不妨一试。

本书所采用的原译文有的是由研究生翻译的，有的是英语系毕业后有七、八年或十几年教学经验或翻译经验的同志翻译的，因此，本书是从实践出发来谈汉英翻译的。

由于本书的目的不仅在于供青年翻译工作者和大学翻译课教师参考，而且拟作大学英语专业四、五年级学生或研究生的翻译课补充教材，所以对本书所配的练习不再给所谓的标准答案。

本书后面的索引很有用处，望读者能充分地利用它。

在本书的写作过程中，我曾受到翻译大师杨宪益先生的热情指导，在这里致以衷心感谢。

由于水平所限，本书定有不少缺点错误，我热切希望广大读者批评指正。

单其昌

一九八九年一月 于北京

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第一章 概 说

和英译汉一样，汉译英的一个基本问题也是译文是否忠于原文的问题。好的译文不仅应忠于原文的内容，还应保持原文表达形式的特点，保持原文的文体与风格。在翻译时，有经验的翻译工作者往往不是以句为单位来译，而是以段为单位来译。有时也可以将原文的一段译为两段或三段，偶尔也可以并段。如果原文意思表达得清楚、通顺、简洁而且生动，如果原文独具风格，我们的译文也应如此。如果原文作者故意将原文写得意思模糊或句子不顺或冗长平板，在翻译时我们也要相应地这么做。

如果由于原作者水平所限，或由于原作者粗心大意，我们在翻译中该怎样对待其行文中的缺陷呢？这恐怕要依翻译的目的而定。如果译者想让读者全面认识一下原作者的水平 and 特点，那么译文就应体现这一点；如果译者的主要目的是介绍原文的思想以及内容，那么译者就无需在读者面前把原作者在表达形式上的个别缺点拿来示众，当然也没有必要将一篇平淡无奇的讲话译得绘声绘色。

一、怎样使译文忠实于原文

1. 对原文理解要正确

如果译者把原文理解错了或理解得不全面，那么译文就不可能忠于原文，例如：“……只有自己懂得或连自己也不懂得的造出来的字句，是不大用的。……”（我怎么做起小说来）

It is not very often that I use phrases or sentences of my own coinage that are only intelligible to me or neologisms that even I myself do not comprehend.

评：“不大用”并不等于“不太经常用”，所以译为“*It is*

not very often”似欠妥,与原文有出入。可改为: I try to avoid either coinage which I alone can understand, or neologisms which even I cannot understand.

2. 译文用词要准确

如果原文用词准确,那么译文的用词也应准确。不可模棱两可;用词不要言过其实,但用词的分量也不要太轻;不要“偷工减料”,也不要添枝加叶;用词要褒贬分明。

(1) 用词不要言过其实。

惊恐的敌人,向我渡船开火了。

The paralyzed enemy fired at our boat.

评: paralyzed用在这里有点言过其实,也不符合逻辑,可改为: The enemy opened fire in alarm at our boat.

又如: 当她是小女孩时就很勇敢,能独自一人在黑夜里走回家。

Even when she was a little girl, she was very gallant. She could walk home alone on dark nights.

评: gallant一词用在这里欠妥,因为它含有“豪侠”、“侠义”的意思,比如在危急时刻一个人总是冒着生命的危险主动帮助别人,这个人可称为 a gallant man. 所以,可将原译文中的gallant改为brave.

(2) 用词的分量不要太轻。

如: 她丈夫的死使她感到很痛苦。

Her husband's death made her unhappy.

评: 在这里用unhappy显得分量不够,可改为 wretched或miserable.

又如: 难以抗拒的男声,却连连地扣击她的耳鼓,撩拨她的心弦,而且越来越近,似乎停留在她的门首。

Her man's voice, so sweet yet painful to her ears, was pulling at her heart-string. It was coming closer too. He seemed to have stopped at their gate.

评: pull用在这里显得力量不够, 可用 tug. tug 的意思是 to pull hard with force or much effort. (如: Parting from his family was a tug at his heart-strings—A. L.D.)

(3) 不要在译文中添枝加叶、任意发挥。

如: 可是有时饿得忍不住, 我还是偷吃了些。(咱们的王政委)

Still I ate some on the sly when I thought I could not fight back my hunger any longer.

评: 原文中没有 I thought 的意思, 在译文中加了 I thought, 不仅不符合原文意思, 而且就英文本身来说也是多余的。

又如: 有一天杨朔来报社找我, 悄悄跟我商量, 要我跟他一起去延安。(忆杨朔)

One day Yang Shuo came to my office to ask me in secret to go with him to the great sacred revolutionary base Yenan.

评: 原文只是“去延安”, 所以在译文中应去掉 the great sacred revolutionary base. ”

(4) 区分贬义词和褒义词

我真想不到会收到我的老朋友继飞的来信, 我们分别十年了。

I was shocked to receive a letter from Jifei, an old friend of mine, whom I had not seen for ten years.

评: shocked用于厌恶、愤慨等感情, 一般不用于令人舒畅的感情。可改为 surprised. (“To be surprised” is to meet with something that momentarily, at least, sets one back and then may or may not afford pleasure.)

(5) 不同的场合要用不同的词去译。

他被子弹打伤了。

He was injured by a bullet.

评：在打仗、搏斗、打架时受伤用wound，平时因事故受伤用injure.

(6) 要注意词汇的应用范围，如果原文用了表示具体的特指的词，那么译文也要相应地这么做。

丝与茶是这个国家的主要商品。

Silk and tea are the main goods made in this country.

评：最好将goods改为commodities，因为goods一般指普通商人的商品，而commodity才特指一个国家的主要商品，所以译为commodities更为确切一些。

又如：那个带手铐的人曾假笑着凝视捕获他的那个警察。

The man in handcuffs was regarding the policeman with a smile who had captured him.

评：smile是个一般的词，可表示多种多样的笑，有多种解释，所以原文可用smirk来代替smile.

(7) 搞清英文的确切含义，不要逐字翻译。

如：解放后人人有了恋爱的自由。

After liberation, each one enjoys free love.

评：free love的意思是指没正式结婚而自由同居。

(the belief in and practice of having sex as one wishes, without marriage)

可改为：After liberation each person enjoys the freedom to choose one's spouse.

(8) 正确运用术语可使译文准确

如：他是个在法律上解除了约束的人。

He is a freeman.

评：freeman指自由民，或享有市民特权的人，或荣誉市民，而freedman才指在法律上解除了约束的人（在历史上，指自由民，即a former slave freed by his master）

(9) 要保持原文的强调重点

如：他的确承认完成这项任务是困难的。

It was difficult, he admitted, to finish this task.

评：原文强调了“承认”，所以在译文中不应把admit放在句中，可改译为：He did admit that to finish this task was difficult.

又如：懒惰是他考试不及格的原因。

Laziness was the cause of his failure in the exam.

评：原文强调的是“懒惰”，所以最好还是改译为：

What caused his failure in the exam was his laziness.
或It was laziness that caused his failure in the exam.

(10) 用词时要注意词汇所表达的时间的长短

如：这小孩已有三年没看到妈妈了，他一直感到烦恼。

Not having seen his mother for three years, the child was worried.

评：原译文没有把“一直”译出来，可改为：Not having seen his mother for three years, the child has been fretting for her.

(11) 不要生搬外国成语。

(A) 有的外国成语只能适用于某一个或几个国家，中国人是不大这么用的，在这种情况下生搬硬套外国成语就会使译文显得很不自然。

如：你这么做徒劳无益。You're sending coals to New castle. 可改译为：You're making a futile effort.

又如：这是他唯一的缺点。This is Achilles' heel. 可改为This is his only defect.

(B) 有的外国成语因用得过多而成了陈腐、不生动的词语（如：Actions speak louder than words.）如果译者想使译文生动就得寻找其他表达方式。

3. 不要漏译

他说他从沦陷的东北，辗转走到华北，好容易来到了广州。

He told us that he had come from the Japanese-occupied Northeast, travelled through north China and arrived in Guangzhou.

评：原文中的“好容易”没有译出，属于漏译。可译为：

He told us that he had trekked all the way from the Japanese-occupied northeast, through north China and finally made his way with difficulty to Guangzhou.

4. 忠于原文的字面与忠于原文的内容的关系

为了使译文忠于原文的内容，有时在翻译时必须改变原文的形式，

如：不一会，又下起鸡蛋大的冰雹来。雹子砸到树上、石头上乱滚。（咱们的“王政委”）

A few moments later, hailstones as big as eggs pelted down, smashing into the trees and rolling on the rock.

评：rolling用在这里与原中文意思有出入，可改用ricocheting（它的意思是“石片、子弹等接触地面、水面、石面等后的跳飞、回跳、漂掠”。在翻译时，有时译文脱离原文字面，这是为了更忠实地表达原文的精神。在这个句子里，rolling虽接近原文的字面“滚”，但远不及用ricocheting好。

又如：王股东亲自坐阵，张军师周密设计，姚掌柜广泛宣传，江老板四处推销。（帽子工厂）Wang, the shareholder of the board of directors, runs the firm. Strategist Zhang does the designing and scheming. Boss Yao handles advertising and public relations, Boss Jiang trots around doing the selling.

评：在原文中，又是股东，又是军师，又是掌柜，又是老板，不大好译，如照原文字面去译，就会造成混乱。可改变一下原文的字面，译为：

Wang, chairman of the board of directors, runs the firm. Zhang, the brains of the business, does the

designing. Yao handles advertising and public relations. And Jiang trots around touting their wares.

有时，原文中用了一些人们已用滥了的成语、俗语或比喻，并不给读者以生动的感觉，那么在翻译时是译成很生动的英文，还是译成平淡无奇的英文，还是采用英文中过时的、用滥了的成语来忠实地模仿原作者的文风，这就要看译者翻译的目的、译文的性质和译者的态度了。

5. 忠于原文的局部与忠于原文基本精神的关系

我们在翻译过程中有时会遇到这样一种情况：原文的某一句或句子中某一部分与原文的基本思想相矛盾。在这种情况下，译者是否有权改变原文的字面？这要看情况而定。如果是由于原作者笔误或用词不当，如果译者的主要目的不是向读者介绍作者的文笔，那么就可以改变这一局部的字面，使之符合原文的基本精神。

如：还是下午三、四点钟的时候，树林里就暗得和黄昏一样，阴森森的吓人。（咱们的“王政委”）

It was dark by four in the afternoon. The gloom under the dense foliage of the trees evoked horror.

评：horror用在这里显得分量太重了些。对于勇敢无畏的红军来说，那种黑暗还算不上什么 horror。如译为 horror，那么在局部说来忠于原文，但在全局来看，却伤害了原文的精神和主旨。可改译为：

It was dark by four in the afternoon. The gloom under the dense foliage was fearsome. 或：Under the dense foliage it was very dark by four in the afternoon.

二、怎样使译文清楚

1. 译文意思要确切

一个英文词往往有两个或两个以上的意思。如果读者不能从

上下文看出译文的确切含义，译文就会含糊不清。如：他们非常富，因为他们是南非的开拓者。

As exploiters of South Africa, they were enormously wealthy. (ambiguous, exploiters可做剥削解，也可做“开采者”解) As developers of South Africa, they were enormously wealthy. (clear)

又如：这个病人好转之后就出了医院的大门径直回家了。

The patient turned the corner, and walked out of the gate of the hospital, and went straight home. (ambiguous) (因为 turn the corner 可做 to become better after an illness, period of difficulties, etc 解，也可做“拐弯”解。) After getting much better, the patient walked out of the gate of the hospital and went straight home. (clear)

又如：他们为学生们盖的教室花钱很少。

They built cheap classrooms for the pupils. (unclear) (cheap: 低劣的, 可指造价低的, 也可指质量低。) At a very small cost they built classrooms for the pupils. (clear)

在同一段中(特别是同一句)中词义要一致，否则译文意思就会含糊不清，或读者至少要想一两分钟才懂得句子的含义。

如：当他坐下以后，我告诉他张同志在中国政府的所在地北京工作，他是经济委员会的一位成员。

When he took a seat, I told him that Comrade Zhang was working in Beijing, the seat of the Chinese government; and that he had a seat on the Economic Commission.

评：三个seat各自的涵义不同，不宜用在同一句子里，这样不仅意思上欠明确，而且译文显得用词贫乏、单调。

又如：我们确保持有公债券的人不再受干扰。

we give those who hold government securities from

further molestation.

(可用 ensure 或 guarantee 来代替 give securities, 否则不仅译文意思不能马上被理解, 而且念起来也不上口。)

2. 词的引伸意义与词的本意连用时容易引起误解

如: 这孩子一边追一边流鼻涕。

The child's nose was running while he was chasing .
(译文好象在说 The child was chasing his own nose.)

可改为: With sniffles, the child was chasing.

又如: 尽管她只是一个年轻人, 但她饲养牲畜。

Though she is a chick, she can raise liestock.

评: 小鸡能饲养牲畜吗? 小鸡能举起牲畜吗?

可改为: Though very young, she can raise live-stock.

又如: 因为穿绿衣服的那个女孩得了感冒, 所以在这场比赛中显得无精打采。

The girl in green looks sick in the contest because she catches cold. (意思: 不清, sick 可做“有病的”解, 也可做不愉快的, “没有生气的”解。) 可改为:

The girl in green looks listless in the contest, because she has caught a cold. (clear)

3. 不要连用过多的名词

如: 我们有已效地控制了学生们传播消息的方式。

We have exercised effective student information dissemination control. (hard to understand)

We have effectively controlled the way the students disseminate information. (clear) (方法是把一个或几个名词改为表示具体动作的动词)

又如: 这个工厂的安全标准委员会最近讨论了关于宣布空气质量规则的事。

The plant safety standards committee discussed recent

air quality regulation announcement. (unclear)

The safety standards committee of the plant recently discussed the announcement of the air quality regulation.

(clear) (用介词短语来代替一连串的名词)

4. 代词运用不当

当读者不能明确地指出代词所代替的先行词时，句子意思就会模糊不清。

如：大夫面带笑容地把孩子交给了孩子的父亲。

The doctor handed the child to the father with a smile on his face. (ambiguous)

With a smile on his face, the doctor handed the child to the father. (clear)

又如：这个人只有在发脾气时才打孩子。

The man never beats his child unless he was nasty. (ambiguous)

He never beats his children unless he was nasty. (clear)
Unless the man was nasty, he never beats his child……
(clear)

又如：因为她很迟钝，所以她操纵这条船有困难。

She had troubles handling the boat because she was heavy-headed. (ambiguous)

Heavy-headed, she had troubles handling the boat. (clear)

5. 如果副词放错位置，译文意思有可能模糊不清。

如：我认为他没有病，他只不过想在家里呆着。

I don't think he is ill and wants just to stay at home. (unclear)

I don't think he is ill, he just wants to stay at home. (clear)

又如：这种模糊不清的现象经常发生，在报纸报导方面尤其

如此。

This sort of ambiguity occurs often in newspaper reports. (unclear)

This sort of ambiguity often occurs, especially in newspaper reports. (clear)

又如：（他们）立即要我第二天向司令部报到。

I was required immediately to report to the headquarters the next day. (unclear)

I was required to report immediately to the headquarters the next day. (unclear)

I was immediately required to report to the headquarters. (clear)

6. 正确地使用连词可使译文清楚

如：在大河小河的流水为我们提供的大量的水力资源中，有一半以上还没有得到开发，煤和油总有个枯竭的时候，铀也是一样，水就不同了，用完了可以补充，成本也固定不变。

We have a large resource in moving waters of our rivers and streams, and much of them is not developed. Coal and oil do not renew themselves. The same is true of uranium. Water is always there and its cost stays the same. (not very clear)

The moving waters of our rivers and streams provide a resource substantial in volume, yet more than half of it is still to be developed. The water resource renews itself, unlike coal and oil and uranium; and its cost will not rise as the years go by. (clear)

7. 选择恰当的范畴词

如：三十岁的女医生孙丽说她的女儿能在比赛中得第一，但另一位四十岁的女医生刘力力却不那么想。

Sun Li, a woman doctor of thirty years old, said